

REGIONAL SOLID WASTE SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE: SOUTH AND WEST SIDES

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Department: PES

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ISSUE STATEMENT

Staff has reviewed potential infrastructure investment options with the Metro Council to improve and modernize the regional solid waste system. The focus of today's session is on investment opportunities and seeking Council direction in the southern and western parts of the Metro region.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests Council guidance on moving forward on building new public solid waste service facilities in the southern and western parts of the Metro region.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Provide direction for building new public solid waste service stations to 1) relieve safety concerns and improve service delivery in the southern part of the region and 2) improve system resilience and provide access to new recycling and garbage services in the western part of the region. Provide public funding to achieve these outcomes with due consideration to timing, generational and equity impacts.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

South Metro:

- Does Council agree that moving public services (self-haul, recycling, and household hazardous waste collection) to another location and retrofitting Metro South Station (MSS) for improved commercial services (including food waste services) are the right priorities at this time?
- Should Metro consider the acquisition of a site large enough to eventually house both public and commercial solid waste and recycling services?

West Metro:

- Does Council wish to pursue one or two garbage and recycling service sites in the west (Cornelius and Hillsboro)?
- If two sites, does Council have a preference on which site to develop first?

Financing:

- How should Metro balance speed of building, level of service and increases in rates?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

1. Direct staff to continue moving forward with one, two or three sites together or in a particular sequence.
2. Direct staff to develop and implement a comprehensive system infrastructure improvement and modernization study.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

South Metro: Relocate all public services to another location in the south part of the region (recycling, self-haul, HHW, etc.); and retrofit MSS for improved commercial services that includes the addition of commercial food services.

West Metro: Establish two sites (Cornelius and Hillsboro) with flexible design elements to accommodate a mix of garbage and recycling services as determined through extensive public involvement in determining the suite of services at each location.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Metro Charter, the Oregon Constitution and Oregon Statutes grant Metro broad authority for planning, managing and overseeing the regional solid waste system to protect public health and safeguard the environment. As a part of these responsibilities, Metro is responsible for developing a regional plan that sets direction for programs, services and facilities. The 2030 Regional Waste Plan, adopted by the Metro Council in March 2019, lays out a very aggressive agenda that encompasses the entire life cycle of the products we use, from design to production to use, until they go to a recycler, landfill or thrift store.

The system that is intended to deliver many of these recycling and waste services is aging and fragile. Many parts of the region have very limited access to services. Very modest investment has been made in the last two decades and Metro has not built any new facilities in more than 30 years. At one time, the regional system was considered state-of-the-art, but has significantly fallen behind in technology, investment and innovation. The region needs to modernize and upgrade the regional system to meet the needs of a growing population and achieve Metro Council's environmental and racial equity objectives. The system must also be better prepared for the ongoing impacts of weather-related climate change and potentially disruptive disasters.

Investments in the region's garbage and recycling infrastructure will help advance the racial equity strategic plan for Metro to advance economic opportunities for communities of color by providing new jobs and working to increase the pay and benefits of system jobs. These upgrades will also increase opportunities for recovery, reuse and recycling with a positive impact on minimization of greenhouse gases.

BACKGROUND

Metro has been evaluating system investments and upgrades over the last several years. Top priorities include expansion of Metro South Station in Oregon City to alleviate unsafe conditions, congestion, traffic and long lines. Improvements at Metro Central Station are necessary to create commercial food waste processing and will be discussed on October 29 at a Council work session.

During the development of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, significant service gaps on the west side of the region were identified, including self-haul drop off for garage cleanouts, construction debris, recyclables and household hazardous waste. In contrast to the central and east side of greater Portland, the west side of the region has no public transfer or service options which has resulted in inequitable access to services and higher rates paid by residents.

Garbage and recycling have a substantial impact on every resident, business and organization in the region. Over the years, a collaborative approach to planning for the future has helped make the region one of the most livable areas on the county. The 2030 Regional Waste Plan and the direction laid out with the current suite of projects continues this tradition – and builds on it with a focus on equity, health and the environment.

The garbage and recycling system creates jobs, supports families, spurs economic activity and strengthens industries. When residents and businesses in the region pay for garbage and recycling services, their payment has direct and indirect impacts on our region's economy – totaling more than \$537 million each year. This investment pays salaries, purchases goods and services and boosts local businesses. Over the history of the region's garbage and recycling system, only some have benefited financially from participation in the system. The 2030 Regional Waste Plan lays the foundation for not only ensuring that services provided throughout the region are equitable and accessible, but that there are opportunities for those who have historically not been engaged in the system to participate. Investing in our current and future facilities will provide an opportunity for expanding participation for all members of our community.

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- What other materials are you presenting today?